

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 2711

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, MARR, UN, IS, LE
SUBJECT: SOUTHERN LEBANON

REF: STATE 072516

SUMMARY: CHARGE' MADE PRESENTATION REFTEL MARCH 22 ON
SOUTHERN LEBANON TO JORDANIAN ROYAL COURT CHIEF SHARAF.
BASED ON RECENT VISIT TO SYRIA, SHARAF (1) BELIEVES ASAD
AND NUMBER OF PLO, INCLUDING FATAH, LEADERSHIP, WANT
STABILITY IN LEBANON, AND WISH TO AVOID FURTHER
AGGRAVATION OF SECURITY SITUATION. ASAD SEES CURRENT UN
EFFORTS AS HELPFUL TO EFFECTIVELY OBTAINING RESULTS ORIGI-
NALLY ENVISAGED BY SYRIA IN CHATAURA AGREEMENT; (2) SHARAF
CONFIRMED THAT IRAQI SUPPLIES WERE TRANSITTING SYRIA TO LEBANON
DURING HIS VISIT THERE. (3) SHARAF THINKS FATAH WILL OBSERVE,
IF NOT PUBLICLY ANNOUNCE, CEASEFIRE, BUT DOES NOT
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DISCOUNT POSSIBILITY REJECTIONISTS, POSSIBLY BACKED BY
IRAQ, MIGHT TRY TO DISRUPT PEACE EFFORTS UNDERWAY. (4)
SHARAF THINKS ULTIMATE PROBLEM IS OBTAINING LEBANESE
POLITICAL CONSENSUS WHICH REQUIRED TO REBUILD LEBANESE
ARMY TO ASSUME ROLE IN SOUTH LEBANON. END SUMMARY.

1. I MADE APPROACH MARCH 22 FROM WRITTEN TALKING POINTS

BASED ON REFTEL TO ROYAL COURT CHIEF SHARIF SHARAF, OUTLINING U.S. OBJECTIVES (PARA. 2) AND REGARDING OUR REQUEST (PARA. 4) FOR JORDAN TO USE WHATEVER INFLUENCE THEY HAVE WITH PALESTINIANS, INCLUDING INDIRECTLY THROUGH THE SYRIANS, TO SECURE A CEASEFIRE; MADE PRESENTATION OF DANGERS OF IRAQI REINFORCEMENTS AND UTILITY OF HAVING SIILASVUO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR ADF TO MOVE DOWN TO THE LITANI, MENTIONED IN PARA. 4 REFTEL.

2. WITHOUT MENTIONING OR IMPLYING CONDITIONAL WEIZMAN COMMITMENT TO SIILASVUO REGARDING ISRAELI WILLINGNESS TO PERMIT SYRIAN FORCES TO MOVE TO LITANI FROM RED LINE, I STRESSED U.S. INTEREST IN SUPPORTING UN EFFORTS WHICH WE EXPECT ARE CURRENTLY UNDERWAY VIS-A-VIS SYRIA TO OBTAIN SYRIAN AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE TO MOVE ADF FORCES TO FILL THE GAP NORTH OF THE LITANI. I STRESSED THAT WE EXPECT UN TO TAKE THE LEAD IN DISCUSSING THIS WITH SYRIA AND WE ARE NOT PRESENTLY REQUESTING A SPECIFIC ACTION BY GOJ ON THIS MATTER, BUT WE WANTED JORDAN TO BE AWARE OF OUR VIEWS OF THE USEFULNESS OF AN ADF (SYRIAN) MOVE TO THE LITANI IF A SATISFACTORY AGREEMENT CAN BE WORKED OUT. I STRESSED PER PARA. 7 WE COULD NOT PREDICT WITH CERTAINTY ISRAELIS WOULD AGREE TO SYRIAN MOVE TO THE LITANI, BUT THE PROSPECTS WOULD BE BETTER FOR SUCH AN AGREEMENT IF THE UN AND SYRIA CAN WORK OUT ARRANGEMENT FOR
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CONTROL OF THEIR RESPECTIVE AREAS AND CAN MAKE AGREE-
MENT IN PRINCIPLE TO MOVE ADF TO LITANI.

3. SHARAF QUESTIONED ME CLOSELY ON THE ON-THE-GROUND SITUATION AND HISTORY OF "RED LINE". BASED ON HIS GENERAL IMPRESSION OF ASAD'S CURRENT VIEWS, SHARAF INDICATED THAT HE SAW NO REASON IN PRINCIPLE WHY SYRIA COULD NOT BE BROUGHT TO AGREE TO ANY SUCH ARRANGEMENT CONTRIBUTING TO STABILIZING CURRENT SOUTH LEBANON SECURITY SITUATION. I MADE SURE HE UNDERSTOOD THIS IMPLIED ADF EXERTING EFFECTIVE CONTROL OVER AREA NORTH OF LITANI, WHICH IMPLIED CONTROLLING ATTEMPTS TO DISRUPT THE CEASEFIRE.

4. SHARAF SAID HE SPENT FOUR HOURS WITH ASAD MARCH 20 AND THERE IS NO RPT NO DOUBT THAT SYRIA SUPPORTS UN PEACE FORCE, THAT ASAD IS UPSET WITH PALESTINIANS AND DETERMINED TO STABILIZE THE SITUATION IN LEBANON.

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SHARAF SAID A LARGE PART OF PLO LEADERSHIP, INCLUDING FATAH, ALSO WANTS TO AVOID AGGRAVATING LEBANESE SECURITY SITUATION. ACCORDING TO SHARAF, ASAD SAID THAT THE PLO FAILURE TO IMPLEMENT THE CHATAURA AGREEMENT HAD BROUGHT ON THE CURRENT MESS IN SOUTH LEBANON AND ASAD IS DETERMINED TO KEEP PLO OUT OF SOUTH LEBANON AND KEEP SITUATION QUIET. ASAD ALSO TOLD SHARAF SYRIA WOULD ONLY STRIKE IN REPLY TO A DIRECT ISRAELI ATTACK ON REGULAR SYRIAN ADF FORCES.

5. I MENTIONED THAT IRAQI CONVOYS ACROSS SYRIA ARE STILL A PROBLEM AND COULD BE VERY DANGEROUS TO STABILITY OF THE SITUATION. SHARAF ASKED FOR SOME SPECIFICS AND I MENTIONED RECENT REPORTS OF 31 IRAQI TRUCKS WITH MEDICAL SUPPLIES AND AMMUNITION TRANSITTING SYRIA TO LEBANON. SHARAF INTERJECTED THAT IRAQI CONVOY WAS DEFINITELY TRANSITTING SYRIA DURING HIS VISIT SINCE SYRIANS WERE
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DISCUSSING IT IN HIS PRESENCE. HE HAD FEW DETAILS HOW-
EVER. HE INDICATED IN REPLY TO MY QUESTION THAT HE HAD
NOT HEARD OF ANY IRAQI CONVOYS OF TROOPS BEING MENTIONED,

BUT BELIEVED CONVOY WAS RESTRICTED TO MATERIEL. SHARAF'S GENERAL IMPRESSION WAS THAT IRAQI CONVOY MIGHT HAVE RESULTED FROM PRESSURE SYRIA IS UNDER FROM RECENT RESISTANCE FRONT CONFERENCE WHERE CONSIDERABLE "OUTBIDDING" WAS GOING ON. SHARAF THOUGHT IT WAS HELPFUL FOR LEBANESE AND OTHERS TO RAISE ISSUE WITH SYRIANS BUT MADE NO JUDGMENT REGARDING HOW HE THOUGHT THIS ISSUE WOULD COME OUT.

6. UNDER FURTHER QUESTIONING, SHARAF DID NOT RULE OUT SOME REJECTIONISTS AND POSSIBLY IRAQ-BACKED GROUPS IN LEBANON TRYING TO DISRUPT CEASEFIRE, BUT HE BELIEVED SYRIA IS FIRMLY SUPPORTING BRINGING PEACE AND ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL. SHARAF, WHO JUST RETURNED FROM VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA WITH PRINCE FAHD, SAID HE THOUGHT THE SAUDIS WERE DEFINITELY IN SUPPORT OF UN FORCE AND HE FELT THE PLO WOULD BE BROUGHT TO RESPECT, IF NOT PUBLICLY ANNOUNCE, THEIR ADHERENCE TO UN PEACE ARRANGEMENTS FOR SOUTH LEBANON.

7. SHARAF PROMISED TO BRIEF KING HUSSEIN ON OUR DISCUSSIONS. HE SAID KING HUSSEIN STILL PLANS TO TAKE SHORT VACATION AT KISH ISLAND, IRAN FROM MARCH 23 TO MARCH 28 OR 29, BUT THAT SHARAF IS AVAILABLE IN MEANTIME FOR ANY FURTHER DISCUSSIONS.

8. COMMENT: WHILE SHARAF DID NOT INDICATE JORDAN WOULD BE DOING ANYTHING SPECIFIC ON THE ISSUES I RAISED, I BELIEVE PRESENTATION WAS HELPFUL TO PLANT OUR IDEAS WITH JORDANIANS. SHARAF WAS SYMPATHETIC
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AND I SEE NO REASON WHY GOJ WOULD NOT SUPPORT OUR POSITION WITH SYRIA AND OTHERS AS OPPORTUNITIES ARISE IN NEAR FUTURE ON THESE ISSUES.
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